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Message Text

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43
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-13 /066 W
---------- 032269
O R 121508Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1037
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS, US, LE
SUBJECT: KNESSET DEBATE ON U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS AND THE LEBANESE SITUATION

BEGIN SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON TOLD THE KNESSET APRIL 12 THAT A) ISRAEL STILL HOPED FOR A POSITIVE SOLUTION TO ITS INTERIM AID REQUEST, AND B) ISRAEL WAS MAINTAINING ALERT WATCH OVER THE LEBANESE SITUATION, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL ITSELF. THERE WAS NO REPEAT NO DISCUSSION OF A GOVERNMENT CRISIS OR A VOTE OF NO-CONFIDENCE. AFTER A BRIEF DEBATE, THE KNESSET VOTED ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY TO CONINUE THE DISCUSSION IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE.
END SUMMARY

1. SPEAKING AT SPECIAL KNESSET SESSION APRIL 12, ALLON SAID THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAD ACTED CORRECTLY IN SEEKING CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR TRANSITIONAL QUARTER FUNDING AND THAT CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR TRANSITITONAL QUARTER FUNDING AND THAT IT WAS DISAPPOINTED AT THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION WHICH CONTRADICTED INITIAL INDICATIONS. ALLON DISMISSED
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CRITICISM THAT ISRAEL WAS BEGGING FOR AID AND JEOPARDIZING

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ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. ISRAEL WOULD NOT HAVE ASKED FOR THE INTERIM AID IF IT DID NOT BELIEVE ITS REQUEST WAS JUSIFIED. ISRAEL HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCE FROM THE SECRETARY AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS THAT ITS REQUEST WOULD BE POSITIVELY ACTED UPON, AND THE SECRETARY HAD NOT DENIED THIS. DISAGREEMENT OVER INTERIM AID DID NOT CONSTITUTE CONFRONTATION IN U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS, WHICH WERE CHARACTERIZED BY SIDE AREAS OF COMMON UNDERSTANDING AND MUTUAL INTERESTS (FULL TEXT BEING TRANSMITTED BY FBIS).

2. TURNING TO THE LEBANESE SITUATION, ALLON SAID THAT ISRAEL WAS WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS WITH FULL ALERTNESS. ISRAEL'S MAIN OBLUGATION WAS TO CONCERN ITSELF WITH THE IMPACT OF THE LEBANSESE TRAGEDY ON THE SECURITY OF IRAEL ITSELF. IN VIEW OF THE CRITICAL NATURE OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION, ALLON SAID, IT WAS EXTREMLY IMPORTANT TO MINIMIZE ISRAELI PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND HE PREFERRED TO LEAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS TO THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE.

3. SPEAKING FOR THE LIKUD, MK YIGAL HOROWITZ ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS AND WARNED THAT THE U.S. IS PREPARING TO IMPLEMENT THE ROGERS PLAN. THE U.S., HE CHARGED, HAS ESTABLISHED ITS POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD SINCE 1973 WITH /ISRAELI CURRENCY" AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT KNOWS THIS BUT LACKS THE COURAGE TO TELL THE UNITED STATES THAT IT WILL NOT MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS. THE ENTRY OF THE SYRIAN ARMY INTO LEBANON IS THE BEGINNING OF THE SARG PLAN FOR GREATER SYRIA WHICH WILL TURN THE LEBANESE/ISRAELI AREA INTO A CONFRONTATION BORDER. HOROWITZ ALSO CALLED ON HE GOVERNMENT TO CARRY OUT ECONOMIC REFORMS WHICH WILL FREE ISRAEL FROM ITS DEEPENDING DEPENDENCY ON THE UNITED STATES AND ENABLE IT TO OPPOSE U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY.

4. THE DEBATE WAS LOW-KEY AND UNEVENTFUL. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF A GOVERNMENT CRISIS OR OF A NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION. AS ALLON HIMSELF SAID, THE DEBATE WAS A SUPERFLUOUS EVENT CALLED BY THE LIKUD TO PUT ON THE RECORD ONCE AGAIN ITS WELL-KNOWN POSITIONS. AT ITS CONCLUSION, ALL THE PARTIES EXCEPT RAKAH VOTED TO HAVE THE DISCUSSION CONTINUE IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE.

5. COMMENT: OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT MOST KNESSET MEMBERS PREFERRED TO KEEP PUBLIC POLEMICS OF U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS TO A MINIMUM WITH THE HOPE THAT A COMPROMISE ON THE INTERIM AID ISSUE MAY STILL BE POSSIBLE.
TOON

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